

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0242

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO AO

SUBJECT: PERSONALITY SKETCH OF MINISTER OF INFORMATION

REF: LISBON 967

1. I SAW JESUINO FREQUENTLY DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT IN ANGOLA AS SECRETARY OF INFORMATION. DURING HIS APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS HERE HE WAS ALWAYS CORDIAL AND WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO BE HELPFUL TO ME. HE IS A FIGURE OF SOME CONTROVERSY, HOWEVER, AND WAS DETESTED BY THE LUANDA PRESS CORPS AND MANY WHITES, WHO CONSIDERED HIM A COMMUNIST AND AN EVIL MAN. HE RETURNED THE FEELING IN SPADES. WHEN ASKED JUST PRIOR TO HIS BOARDING THE PLANE FOR PORTUGAL ON JANUARY 28 TO GIVE A FINAL COMMENT ON THE LUANDA PRESS, HE SAID, SIMPLY AND ELOQUENTLY, "UMA BOA MERDA." WHEN JESUINO HAS IT IN FOR SOMEONE, HE HATES HIM WITH GREAT RELISH.

2. HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF TO BE A PROTEGE OF ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO AND TOLD US EARLY IN HIS TOUR HERE THAT HE WOULD GO WHERE THE ADMIRAL WENT. HE ACCURATELY REFLECTED THE VIEWS AND THOUGHTS OF THE ADMIRAL AND WHEN HE TOLD ME THE GOVERNMENT WAS PLANNING TO TAKE A CERTAIN ACTION HE WAS GENERALLY CORRECT. IN SHORT, HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE INNER CIRCLE AND KNEW NOT ONLY THE POLICY BUT THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT WENT INTO SHAPING IT. ON THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN THE ADMIRAL GAVE SMALL LUNCHEONS, JESUINO WOULD BE

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PRESENT. HE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ADMIRAL, SO MUCH SO THAT WHEN

THE ADMIRAL BECAME ANGRY JESUINO BECAME ANGRY. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THE ADMIRAL WOULD BLOW OFF STEAM, RELAX AND LAUGH ABOUT THE PROBLEM, WHILE JESUINO WOULD CONTINUE TO NURSE A GRUDGE. HE TAKES HIMSELF AND HIS WORK SERIOUSLY AND BECOMES OFFENDED WHEN OTHERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND HIM.

3. LIKE THE ADMIRAL, JESUINO WHILE HERE PROFESSED TO BELIEVE THAT THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN PORTUGAL ENTAILS RISKS AND WILL BRING VIOLENCE IN ITS WAKE, BUT THAT UNLESS THE PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS ARE ALLOWED FULL FREEDOM, THEY WILL NEVER LEARN THE SELF-RESTRAINT NECESSARY FOR A DEMOCRACY TO FUNCTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO TOLERATE THE FREE PLAY OF THE PRESS HERE. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HE SLAPPED HEAVY FINES ON NEWSPAPERS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF STORIES OR ANNOUNCEMENTS THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED TENDENTIOUS. JESUINO ARGUED THAT THE WHITE CONTROLLED PRESS AND MONEYED WHITE INTERESTS WERE ATTEMPTING BLOCK DECOLONIZATION AND MUST BE PUT DOWN, WHATEVER THE COST IN INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM. FOR THE AFM THE END WAS AN INDEPENDENT ANGOLA AND NOTHING WAS ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH THAT GOAL.

4. JESUINO IDENTIFIES VERY CLOSELY WITH THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, BUT SEEMED NOT OVERLY INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED WEEKLY MEETINGS HERE. I DETECTED A DEFINITE ELITIST ATTITUDE THAT UNDOUBTEDLY STEMMED FROM HIS PROXIMITY TO THE LEVERS OF POWER AND THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN THE ANGOLAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. BY THE TIME THE ADMIRAL AND HIS COTERIE LEFT LUANDA THEY WERE STILL TALKING ABOUT THE NEED TO PRACTICE DEMOCRACY, BUT JESUINO WAS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GUIDING ROLE TO BE PLAYED IN THE AFM. HE, AND THE ADMIRAL, HAD ENOUGH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE BY THE TIME THEY LEFT TO REALIZE THAT THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT IS TO GOVERN AND THAT LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES THE PEOPLE WILL RAISE HELL.

5. JESUINO FELT STRONGLY THAT HE WAS MISUNDERSTOOD AND THAT HE DID NOT DESERVE THE EPITHET LEFTIST, MUCH LESS THAT OF COMMUNIST. HE OFTEN TRIES OUT ON VISITORS AND ACQUAINTANCES A LINE OF THOUGHT OR AN ACTION HE TOOK AND ASKS IF IT COULD BE CONSIDERED COMMUNIST. IF ONE IS GRACIOUS AND SAYS NO, JESUINO AGREES WHOLE-HEARTEDLY, AND HAS THE NECESSARY VINDICATION TO CARRY ON UNTIL THE NEXT BOUT OF SELF-DOUBT. IF ONE ARGUES WITH HIM HE TAKES A RATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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APPROACH TO THE DISCUSSION, BUT NO ONE SHOULD BE MISLED BY HIS SEEMING LACK OF RANCOR AT THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH HIM. HE IS STRONGLY NATIONALISTIC AND HIS SENSITIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT PORTUGAL SEEM TO BE AN EXTENSION OF HIS FEELINGS ABOUT HIMSELF. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT HE IS EMOTIONALLY COMMITTED AT THIS POINT IN TIME TO THE POLITICAL LEFT, BUT I IMAGE HIS CURRENT ATTITUDE IS A KNEEJERK REACTION TO ALL THAT WENT BEFORE IN PRE-COUP PORTUGAL, RATHER THAN A COHERENT DOCTRINE BASED ON ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION.

6. JESUINO HAD A GREAT DEAL OF CONTACT WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS DURING HIS TOUR HERE, AS HE WAS REQUIRED TO BRIEF NEWSMEN AND OTHER VISITORS. HE ALSO DID A GOOD BIT OF PROTOCOL WORK ON BEHALF OF THE ADMIRAL. WHATEVER ELSE HE MIGHT HAVE GOT OUT OF THE CONTACTS, HIS ENGLISH IMPROVED MARKEDLY. AS IS TRUE OF MOST OFFICERS HERE, JESUINO LEFT HIS WIFE IN LISBON, WHERE SHE HAS A JOB.
KILLORAN

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